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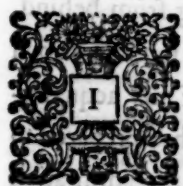
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CRITIC and CENSOR-GENERAL.

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In cute curandâ plus æquò operata.

HOR.



HAVE somewhere seen a print, representing a man and a woman of every nation in the world, drest according to the mode of their respective countries. I could not help reflecting at the time, that the fashions, which prevail in *England* in the space of a century, would enable any of our painters to fill a picture with as great a variety of habits; and that an *Englishman* or *Englishwoman*, in one part of the piece, would be no more like an *Englishman* or *Englishwoman* in the other, than a *Frenchman* resembles a *Chinefe*. Very extraordinary revolutions have already happened in the habits of this kingdom; and as dress is subject to unaccountable changes, posterity may perhaps see without surprise our ladies strut about in breeches, while our men waddle in hoop-petticoats.

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IN the days of queen *Elizabeth*, it was the fashion for the ladies to conceal and wrap up as much of their bodies as they could: Their necks were encompassed with a broad ruff, which likewise spread itself over their bosoms; and their sleeves were continued down and fastened close to their wrists, while only their feet were allowed just to peep from beneath the modest fardingale; so that nothing was exposed to the impertinent eye of man but their faces. Our modern ladies have run into the contrary extreme, and appear like so many rope-dancers: They have discarded as much of their cloaths as with any tolerable decency can be thrown off, and may be said (like the *Indian*) to be all face: the neck and bosom are laid bare, and disentangled from the invidious vail of an handkerchief; the stays are sunk half way down the waist, and the petticoat has risen in the same proportion from the ancle. Nor is the lover only captivated by the naked charms, which meet his sight before; but our ladies, like the *Parthians*, have also learned the art of wounding from behind, and attract our attention no less by laying their shoulders open to the view, which (as a young physician of my acquaintance once observed) makes them look, as if they prepared to receive a blister. A Naked Lady is no longer the admiration only of a masquerade: every public assembly will furnish us with *Iphigenias* undrest for the sacrifice; and if the next summer should happen to be an hot one, our ladies will perhaps improve on the thin vesture of the *Spartan* virgins, and appear abroad in nothing but a lawn shade and gauze petticoat. If the men should take the hint from the other sex, and begin to strip in their turn, I tremble to think what may be the consequence: for, if they go on in proportion with the women, we may soon expect to see our fine gentlemen, like the Highlanders, without breeches.

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It would be endless to trace the strange revolutions, that have happened in every part of the female dress within these few years. The hoop has been known to expand and contract itself from the size of a butter-churn to the circumference of three hogheads: at one time it was sloped from the waist in a pyramidical form: at another it was bent upwards like an inverted bow, by which the two angles, when squeezed up on each side, came in contact with the ears. At present it is nearly of an oval form, and scarce measures from end to end above twice the length of the wearer. The hoop has at present lost much of its credit in the female world, and has suffered much from the innovation of short sacks and negligees; which, it must be confessed, are equally becoming to the lady of pleasure and the lady of quality: for as the men will agree, that next to no cloaths at all nothing is more ravishing than an easy dishabille, our ladies for that reason perhaps come into public places, as if they were just got out of bed, or as if they were ready to go into it. This, while it is the fashion, must be agreeable; but I must own, that I could sooner approve of their encircling themselves in so many ells of whalebone, than to see them affect to appear with their cloaths huddled on so loosely and indecently. This manner of dressing, or rather not dressing, was brought from *Paris*: but I would have my fair readers consider, that as this loose method of dress is calculated to hide any defects in the body, it is very impolitic to suffer all that symmetry and elegant turn of shape they are mistresses of, to be smothered under it; since these habits can be of no more service to their persons, than paint (that other *Paris* commodity) can add to the natural red and white of their complexion, though perhaps it may heighten the fallow visages of the *French*.

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BUT of all the branches of female dress no one has undergone more alterations than that of the head. The long lappets, the horse-shoe cap, the *Brussels* head, and the prudish mob pinned under the chin, have all of them had their day. The present mode has rooted out all these superfluous excrescences, and in the room of a slip of cambric or lace has planted a whimsical sprig of spangles or artificial flowrets. We may remember, when for a while the hair was tortured into ringlets behind: at present it is braided into a *queue* (like those formerly worn by the men, and still retaining the original name of *Ramillies*,) which, if it were not reverted upwards, would make us imagine that our fine ladies were afflicted with the *Plica Polonica*.

IF the caps have passed through many metamorphoses, no less a change has been brought about in the other coverings contrived for the head. The diminutive high-crowned hat, the bonnet, the hive, and the milkmaid's chip hat, were rescued for a time from old women and servant girls, to adorn heads of the first fashion: nor was the method of cocking hats less fluctuating, till they were at length settled to the present mode; by which it is ordered that every hat, whether of straw or silk, whether of the chambermaid or the mistress, must have their flaps turned up perpendicularly both before and behind. If the end of a fine lady's dress was not rather ornamental than useful, we should think it a little odd, that hats, which seem naturally intended to screen their faces from the heat or severity of the weather, should be moulded into a shape, that prevents their answering either of these purposes: but we must, indeed, allow it to be highly ornamental, as the present hats worn by the women are more bold and impudent than the broad-brimmed staring *Kavenbullers* worn a few years ago by the
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the men. These hats are also decorated with two waving pendants of ribband, hanging down from the brim on the left side. I am not so much offended at the flaming air, which these streamers carry with them, as I am afraid lest it should spoil the eyes of my pretty countrywomen, which are constantly provoked to cast a glance at them; and I have myself often observed an obliging ogle or ravishing leer intercepted by these mediums, so that when a lady has intended to charm her lover, she has shocked him with an hideous squint.

THE ladies have long been severely rallied on their too great attention to finery: but, to own the truth, dress seems at present to be as much the study of the male part of the world as the female. We have gentlemen, who "will lay a whole night (as *Benedick* says) carving the fashion of a new doublet:" They have their toilettes too as well as the ladies, set out with washes, perfumes and cosmetics, and will spend the whole morning in dressing their hair, scenting their linen, and arching their eye-brows. Their heads (as well as the ladies) have undergone various mutations, and have worn as many different kinds of wigs, as the block at their barber's. About fifty years ago they buried their heads in a bush of hair; and the beaux (as *Swift* says) lay hid beneath the penthouse of a full-bottomed perriwig. But as they then shewed nothing but the nose, mouth and eyes, the fine gentlemen of our time not only oblige us with their full faces, but have drawn back their side curls quite to the tip of the ear.

As *France* appears to be the wardrobe of the world, I shall conclude my paper with a piece of secret history, which gives us some insight into the origin of deriving all our fashions from thence.—The celebrated Lord *Foppington*, among his other amours, had once an intrigue with a milliner

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of *Covent-Garden*, who after some time brought a lovely girl into the world, and called her after his lordship's surname, *FASHION*. The milliner brought up the child in her own house till the age of fifteen, at which time she grew very pressing with Lord *Foppington* to make some provision for his daughter. My lord, who was never much pleased with this consequence of his amours, that he might be rid of the girl for ever, put her into the hands of a friend, who was going abroad, to place her in a nunnery: but the girl, who had very little of the vestal in her disposition, contrived to escape from her conductor, and fly to *Paris*. There her beauty and sprightliness soon secured her many friends; and she opened a genteel shop in her mother's business. She soon made herself remarkable for contriving the most elegant head-dresses, and cutting out ruffles with the most ravishing slope: her fancy was besides so inexhaustible, that she almost every day produced a great variety of new and beautiful patterns. She had many adorers, and at last married his Most Christian Majesty's taylor. This alliance brought the dress of all *Paris* under their jurisdiction: and the young lady, out of a natural love for her native country, proposed the extending their care to the fine gentlemen and ladies of *London*. In pursuance of this, *Monsieur* her husband, two or three times in the year, sends over a suit of cloaths entirely *à la Paris* as a pattern to *Messieurs Regnier* and *Lynch* of *Leicester Fields* and *Pall Mall*, while his wife sends over a little wooden *Mademoiselle* to her relations in *Tavistock Street*.

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